

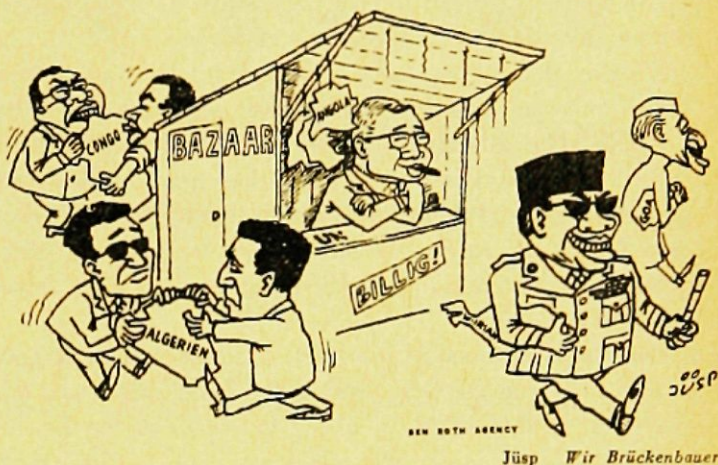
• Abroad •

Edinburgh. This year's offering at the famous summer Festival added an International Writers' Conference. Although its sessions at McEwan Hall (August 20-24) managed to attract an average of 2,000 weirdly assorted paying customers (Indians in saris, local matrons, priests, American tourists, swarms of publishers), the general verdict was so negative that the experiment will probably not be repeated. America's Mary McCarthy was belle of the ball; and with Angus Wilson, Malcolm Muggeridge, Norman Mailer, Lawrence Durrell, Henry Miller and Alain Robbe-Grillet formed a multi-sexed septet under Dame Rebecca West's coldly cast eye. Miller wished the conference had been about painting instead of the novel, "which must be dead these 50 years." Morris Blythman of Glasgow proved that the Scots ballad was not dead by singing a clutch of anti-Polaris songs to guitar accompaniment. At one session the panel of speakers found the water pitchers filled with whiskey. Everyone gave routine laments about nationalism, colonialism, censorship, nuclear weapons, etc., but the favorite topics were homosexuality, drugs and incest. One writer felt it necessary to repeat each day that he *was* a homosexual, and got terribly cross at an Indian who stated that "homosexuals could not experience the highest form of love." (Dame Rebecca commented that there should have been two conferences, one for writers and the other for persons who wanted to argue what sex they belonged to.) An Australian author, Hal Porter, summed up: "I haven't understood a word. I am here and I don't know why. It's some sort of trick on the part of the management, whoever the management is."

London. The American press has failed to indicate the extraordinary subtlety of the legal proceedings over the case of Robert Soblen. Soblen's counsel argued that as soon as he set foot in England, no matter how he got there, British law became fully applicable. Espionage is not an extraditable offense. Therefore Soblen could not legally be "surrendered" to a specific country (the U.S.). He could only be "deported": made to get out, but without specification of where. Any other solution would have to rest on the sovereign decision that the affair is "political," thus not in all respects "judicial."

Accra. Osagyefo ("Redeemer") Kwame Nkrumah's sudden arrest of three of his closest collaborators—Foreign Minister Ako Adjei, Information Minister Tawia Adamafio, party secretary H. Coffie-Crabbe—has been followed by a press campaign for their execution. The *Ghanaian Times*, under the heading, "Hang Them!" denounces the three as opportunists, criminal sycophants, diabolical renegades and traitors. (Ironically, it was Adamafio who invented the slogans: "Nkrumah is our Redeemer! Nkrumah never dies!") The National Assembly has before it a new law to make the one-party system official.

Bangkok. Many of the nine million inhabitants of northeastern Thailand, across the Mekong river from Laos, are Lao-speaking and of the same ethnic strain as the majority of Laotians. During recent months, the Communist organization in Laos, Pathet Lao, has begun an active double-pronged penetration campaign. The Pathet Lao has set up two politico-military training schools in Laos for selected northeasterners: one north of Paksane, and the other in the mountain village of Mahaxay, near the Mekong. Pathet Lao agents frequently cross the river into the nearer villages, to propagandize the peasants, sometimes bringing money, medicines and blankets along with promises of good things to come.



CHARITY BAZAAR

Sofia. A series of racial incidents involving African students at the University of Sofia was climaxed two weeks ago by a general brawl at a downtown restaurant. Fifty Africans, mostly from Ghana and Ethiopia, exchanged insults, dishes and furniture with Bulgarian students. Seven Ghanaians were expelled from the University and the country the next day; most of the others took refuge in their embassies. This is only the most public explosion in a rumble that is going on in Moscow, Prague, Leipzig and elsewhere behind the Iron Curtain. Everywhere the African students accuse their Communist hosts of practising disguised but galling forms of discrimination. The Africans are housed in special hostels. They find it almost impossible to make friends; most student activities are closed to them; and they invariably get into fights if they try to dance with the local girls.

Aden. The merger of Aden, at the tip of the Arabian peninsula, with its hinterland (politically organized as a medley of British-protected sheikdoms) into a Federation of South Arabia is an indirect consequence of the currently proceeding decolonization of British East Africa. After World War II Britain conceived of East Africa, in particular Kenya, as its principal strategic base for the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. Now that withdrawal from East Africa is approaching, and Suez gone, she seeks to transfer the strategic function to Aden. She hopes that the addition of the friendly, old-fashioned sheikdoms will help counteract the radical winds of change that have lately been felt within Aden proper.

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